

# Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

Teaching people to identify and respond to signs of mental illness or substance use disorders.



## SUPPORT - SUGGEST - CONNECT

those in need to the resources to help

**27.1%**<sup>1</sup> of adults in MONTANA experienced a **mental illness of some kind in 2021-2022**

Approximately half of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14. Close to half the U.S. population will experience a mental illness at some point in their lives.<sup>3</sup>

We all know someone—a friend, family member, coworker or neighbor—who has experienced a mental health problem of some kind. The sooner we can connect people to support and services, the better their health outcomes will be.

Since 2017, MSU Extension has been providing Mental Health First Aid certification training to reduce stigma, encourage help-seeking, and bolster skills for responding and referring people to professional help.

**Mental Health First Aiders are trained to respond in supportive ways to someone experiencing a mental health problem**, as well as suggest and connect people to community resources, especially professional help.

Since beginning in 2017 MSU Extension instructors have trained

**1026 MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDERS**  
**235 in Youth MHFA**  
**791 in Adult MHFA**

### Did you know?

**MHFA and Youth MHFA are both offered in three formats**

- **Traditional in-person training**  
Approximately 8 hours
- **Blended with virtual instructor-led session (Blended—Virtual)** Participants complete 2 hours of self-paced online coursework in the MHFA Connect training system before attending 4.5-5.5 hours of instructor-led training through a virtual session.
- **Blended with in-person instructor-led session (Blended—In-Person)** Participants complete 2 hours of self-paced online coursework in the MHFA Connect training system before attending 5.5 hours of instructor-led training through an in-person session.

In 2024 MSU Extension instructors provided MHFA training to school nurses, Extension professionals, housing and human resources staff at Glacier National Park Lodges, and staff members at Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribe Early Childhood Services.

A 2023 survey of Montana high school students found **1 in 4 SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE and 1 in 7 HAD ATTEMPTED SUICIDE in the past year**<sup>2</sup>

**21%** of adults in MONTANA had a **SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER**<sup>2</sup>

Montana MHFA Adult and Youth classes may be requested at [montana.edu/extension/health/mental\\_health.html](https://montana.edu/extension/health/mental_health.html)

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2023). State Data Tables and Results from the 2021 - 2022 NSDUH. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/nsduh/state-reports-NSDUH-2022>

2. Montana Office of Public Instruction. (2023). 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey: High School Results. <https://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Data-Reporting/Youth-Risk-Behavior-Survey>

3. National Alliance on Mental Illness. (2023, April). Mental Health by the Numbers. <https://www.nami.org/about-mental-illness/mental-health-by-the-numbers/>